

The City of Numbered Days

"It's casting pearls before swine, but you're a pretty good sort of swine, Grizzly. If you'll promise to keep your feet out of the trough, I'll tell you. Away back in the porringer period, in which we are all like the pin-feathered dicky-birds, open-mouthed for anything anybody may drop into us, some one fed me with the number seven."

"Succulent morsell!" chuckled Grislow. "Did it agree with you?"

Brouillard sat back from the fire and clasped his hands over his bent knees. He was of a type rare enough to be noteworthy in a race which has drawn so heavily upon the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic stocks for its build and coloring: a well-knit figure of a man, rather under than over the normal stature, but bulging athletically in the loose-fitting khaki of the engineer; dark of skin, even where the sun had not burned its rich mahogany into the olive, and owning a face which, with the upcurled mustaches, the brooding black eyes, and the pure Gallic outline of brow and jaw, might have served as a model for a Vierge study of a fighting *franc-tireur*.

"I don't remember how early in the game the thing began," he resumed, ignoring Grislow's joking interruption, "but away back in the dimmest